



"The caretaker government organized timely elections and today new assemblies have come into being in the country"

Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs
Murtaza Solangi

President Alvi for enhanced cooperation between audit institutions of Pakistan & Azerbaijan

Appreciates AGP's role in carrying out peer reviews of the Supreme Audit Institution of Azerbaijan

VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi has called for increasing cooperation between the supreme audit institutions of Pakistan and Azerbaijan for sharing best auditing practices to enhance transparency and financial accountability. He said that public sector accounting was a critical component of financial management within government organizations that helped ensure transparency and accountability in government spending. President Dr. Arif Alvi expressed these views while talking to the visiting Chairman of the Chamber of Accounts of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Vugar Gulmammadov, who along with his delegation, called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr on Friday. The Auditor General of Pakistan (AGP), Muhammad Ajmal Gondal, and officials of AGP also attended the meeting.

Chairman of the Chamber of Accounts of Azerbaijan (CAA), Vugar Gulmammadov, briefed the President about the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between the Supreme Audit Institution of Azerbaijan, CAA, and the Supreme Audit Institution of Pakistan, AGP, for peer reviews of public accounts. He said that the MoU would help deepen friendly relations between the two countries.

The President lauded the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between AGP and CAA, saying that it would increase cooperation between two countries in the field of Public Sector Auditing. He added that cooperation between CAA and AGP would be mutually beneficial for both the countries. He also appreciated AGP's role in carrying out peer reviews of the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) of Azerbaijan.

Talking to the delegation, the President said that Pakistan accorded special importance to its relations with Azerbaijan, which were based on common faith, shared history, and people-to-people contacts. He stated that promoting cultural exchanges and strengthening cooperation in the cultural and economic fields was vital for fostering understanding and mutually beneficial development between the two brotherly nations. He termed the cooperation between Pakistan and Azerbaijan "pivotal for promoting peace, stability, development in the region".

President Dr. Arif Alvi also felicitated President Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan on his re-election in the Presidential elections held on 7th February 2024 and hoped that the bilateral relations between Pakistan and Azerbaijan would be further strengthened during his tenure.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Chamber of Accounts of Azerbaijan, Mr Vugar Gulmammadov, along with his delegation called on President Dr Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Sardar Ayaz Sadiq elected NA Speaker for the third time while securing 199 votes

Outgoing Speaker NA Raja Parvez Ashraf administers oath to newly elected Speaker NA Sardar Ayaz Sadiq

VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) lawmaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq was elected as the Speaker of the 16th National Assembly on Friday after the conclusion of the voting process. Sardar Ayaz Sadiq secured 199 votes. Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has been elected speaker of the National Assembly for the third time. Outgoing Speaker NA Raja Parvez Ashraf administered oath to newly elected Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq.

The PML-N politician defeated the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf-backed independent lawmaker Malik Muhammad Amir Dogar, who was supported by the Sunni Ittehad (SIC) Council lawmakers in the House. Malik Muhammad Amir Dogar secured 91 votes. Only one vote was declared invalid. A total of 291 votes were cast out of which one was declared invalid.

Sardar Ayaz Sadiq won the speaker's contest with 199 votes, gaining a majority from the members of the PML-N, PPP and other lawmakers backing his nomination in the lower house. Sardar Ayaz Sadiq's opponent Malik Muhammad Amir Dogar was able to get only 91 votes. Sardar Ayaz Sadiq had served as the speaker from 2013-2018 in the 14th National Assembly twice. After the result was announced Sadiq went and met Dogar where he also met other SIC lawmakers.

The NA session was convened on Friday to elect the speaker and deputy speaker during



which opposition lawmakers chanted slogans against alleged rigging in the Feb 8 polls.

Before the session started SIC's parliamentary party meeting was held in the house's lobby, where they vowed to continue their protest in the assembly. This is the second consecutive day that SIC has been protesting in the National Assembly over "rigged" results.

As the session began, Speaker Raja Parvez Ashraf asked if there were any new members present who had missed the oath-taking a day earlier. As no new members came forward, the speaker then gave the floor to PTI-backed Omar Ayub Khan to speak on a point of order. The lawmaker alleged that strangers were present in the house.

"People who got fake mandate have entered the house, hence, they should be expelled," said Omar Ayub Khan, adding that "prisoner number 804", the number assigned to PTI founder Imran Khan in Adiala Jail, should be

brought to the Assembly.

The MNA, who had a sore throat, said they would raise their voice even if their throat is sore or slit.

Omar Ayub reiterated that the House was incomplete as the ECP is yet to announce the allocation of reserved seats in the National Assembly.

After Ayub spoke, the speaker informed him that the lawmakers that were sitting in the House were those who were declared as winners by the Election Commission of Pakistan after the February 8 elections. He also added that if they had an objection then they should approach the ECP. The speaker's comments infuriated the SIC members.

Following this, the speaker began the process for the speaker's election.

The voting lasted for at least two hours and chants and slogans could be heard during the process.

SIC lawmakers that cast their votes chanted slogans in favour of incarcerated PTI founder Imran Khan as they put their ballot paper in the box set up near the speaker's seat.

Meanwhile during the proceedings on Friday, a drama unfolded when the MQM-Pakistan surprisingly walked out of the house and boycotted the polling process for the speaker.

PML-N leaders including the nominee for speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq went after them in Committee Room No. 2 to win over them to return to the house and participate in the voting process.

MoPA played remarkable role during interim set up: Solangi

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi has said that the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs expressed remarkable performance and cooperation during interim set up.

He stated this while speaking at a farewell ceremony organized by the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs in his honour on Friday. Murtaza Solangi said that with the grace of Allah Almighty, the democratic process was going on in the country. The caretaker minister said he had been reiterating the commitment of the government since the first day that the elections would be held at time schedule given by Election Commission of Pakistan. "The caretaker government organized timely elections and today new assemblies have come into being in the country," he maintained. Democracy could not succeed without participation of people, Murtaza Solangi said and expressed the hope that the upcoming government would meet the expectations of the people.

He said as the Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, it was an honour for him to participate in the meetings of the Parliament.

Solangi also thanked the Members of Parliament and all the political parties who had cooperated with him during the tenure of the caretaker government.

On this occasion, the Additional Secretary and Senior Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs informed the minister about the performance and initiatives of the ministry during the caretaker period. Murtaza Solangi personally met all the staff at end of the ceremony.

Pakistan Navy continues relief efforts in Gwadar's rain hit areas

KARACHI: Pakistan Navy continues relief efforts in rain and flood hit areas of Gwadar to provide relief to the affectees. According to details, Pakistan Navy troops in coordination with local administration were continuously engaged in de-flooding of homes and streets in different parts of the city while Pakistan Navy boats, divers and mobile medical teams were prepared to promptly respond to any emergency situation. The Pakistan Navy troops along with civil administration through continued efforts were engaged for early restoration of road connectivities for onward smooth conduct of rescue activities. Further, Pakistan Navy teams were providing cooked food, drinking water and ration bags to distressed people in various areas of Gwadar. Apart from ration distribution medical assistance was also being provided to the local affected community. In this regard, Pakistan Navy's medical teams were providing free healthcare facilities to flood affectees at a medical camp established for local flood affected populace. Pakistan Navy has always remained at the forefront in extending humanitarian assistance during natural calamities. Pakistan Navy was determined to continue the rescue and relief operation till the rehabilitation of all distressed people of Gwadar. INP

Pharma industry should focus on Africa, Central Asia & Afghanistan to boost exports: Minister

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination Dr. Nadeem Jan has said that despite the short time, he made strenuous efforts to bring reforms in the health sector. He said several steps were taken, including the digitization of DRAP, a new policy for the prices of medicines, and the search for new markets to promote exports.

Talking to President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari and other members of chamber during his visit to ICCI on Friday, he said that Pakistan's pharma sector has the potential to expand the country's exports. The industry should focus on exports to countries in Central Asia, Africa, and Afghanistan.

Dr Nadeem Jan said that it was his mission to bring reforms in the health sector. He said that



he worked day and night for the country's pride he took practical steps to increase pharma exports for the betterment of the economy and took the Pharma Park project forward. He said that this project is of key importance to the industry. This project will promote the pharma industry. He said that the business community should play its full role in the health sector. The services of the business community for the poor and backward people in hospitals should be exemplary. INP

Senate by-elections on six vacant seats on March 14: ECP

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) Friday unveiled the schedule for conducting elections to fill six vacant Senate seats, with the voting set for March 14. According to ECP, six seats had become vacant, comprising one in Islamabad, two in Sindh, and three in Balochistan, due to Senate members being elected to other legislative bodies. According to schedule, collection of nomination papers will take place on March 2 and 3. Lists of candidates are set to be published on March 3, with scrutiny of nomination papers to be finalized by March 5. The appeals regarding the acceptance or rejection of nomination papers will be heard on March 7 and resolved by March 9. A revised list of candidates will be issued on March 9, after which candidates can withdraw their nomination papers until March 10. Polling is scheduled for March 14. Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani and Molana Abdul Ghafoor Haideri have vacated their Senate seats after being elected as members of the National Assembly. Nisar Ahmed Khuro and Jam Mehtab Hussain Dahar have been elected as members of the provincial assembly of Sindh, while Prince Ahmed Umer Ahmedzai and Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti have become members of the Balochistan Assembly. APP

Minister Aneeq calls for OIC delegation to broker ceasefire talks with Israeli premier

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Aneeq Ahmed on Friday proposed that a delegation comprising of crucial Muslim countries, under the banner of Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), should talk to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for immediate ceasefire. In a meeting with Palestinian Ambassador Ahmed Jawad Rabi'i, the minister said Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Malaysia, Indonesia, Iran, Qatar, Egypt, and Pakistan should play their pivotal role in that regard. The two leaders exchanged views on mutual interests and the situation in Palestine. Minister Aneeq highlighted the brotherly relations between Pakistan and Palestine, affirming Pakistan's ongoing moral and diplomatic support for its Palestinian brethren. He said, "Pakistan stands as the foremost supporter of the Palestinian cause and will continue to do so. The unity of the Muslim Ummah can lead to a resolution of the Palestine issue."



The minister stressed the importance of collective action to restore the sanctity of the Islamic world. Palestinian Ambassador, Ahmed Rabi'i expressed gratitude for the love and support shown by the people of Pakistan towards Palestine. He expressed gratitude for Pakistan to appreciate Palestine's resilience and unity against Israeli aggression. The ambassador informed that the casualties of Israeli aggression include over 70 percent children and women, totaling over 21,000 casualties. More than 20,000 buildings in Gaza had been destroyed by Israeli occupying forces, he maintained. APP

Pakistan will continue to extend political, diplomatic & moral support to our Kashmiri brothers and sisters: Mumtaz Zahra Baloch

Says Israel must also face justice for its crimes against humanity being perpetrated with impunity against the Palestinian people

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch has said that Pakistan will continue to extend political, diplomatic and moral support to our Kashmiri brothers and sisters for the just and peaceful settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with the United Nations Security Council Resolutions. This was stated by FO Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch while addressing the weekly press briefing on Friday. She said that on 28th February 2024, Pakistan successfully completed its tenure as the Chair of the Vienna Chapter of the Group of 77 and China. She said that Pakistan's focus during its chairmanship was on addressing important issues of concern for developing

countries, including wars, geopolitical conflicts, climate disasters, economic hardships, poverty, and hunger. It emphasized collaboration between organizations to seek consensus-driven solutions that prioritized the needs of developing countries. It also aimed to bolster cooperation among Group members while fostering South-South and triangular partnerships. Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said that on completion of Pakistan's tenure, Foreign Minister Jahl Abbas Jilani, has reaffirmed Pakistan's continued commitment to the Group and the values, ideals and principles it represents. She said that at the ongoing 55th Session of the Human Rights Council, Foreign Secretary, Muhammad Syrus Sajjad Qazi, delivered a statement



reaffirming Pakistan's commitment to making 2024 pivotal for human rights, aligning with the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Foreign Secretary reaffirmed Pakistan's staunch support for promoting universal human rights and emphasized the protection and indivisibility of all human rights, both domestically and internationally. He also

pledged to enhance cooperation with UN human rights mechanisms. She said that the Foreign Secretary urged the High Commissioner's Office to closely monitor the situation in IOJK, to establish a Commission of Inquiry to investigate the human right situation there. She said that the Foreign Secretary has reiterated Pakistan's demand for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire in Gaza, called for an end to Israel's aggression and emphasized the need for full and effective implementation of the provisional measures ordered by the International Court of Justice. She said that last week, Foreign Secretary Muhammad Syrus Sajjad Qazi also delivered a statement at the high-level segment of the Conference on Disarmament (CD).

He underlined Pakistan's position on the disturbing normalization of the threat of force and aggression, the potential escalation of unresolved disputes into full-fledged conflicts, and the expansion of arsenal and deployment of destabilizing weapon systems in pursuit of strategic dominance. Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said that the Foreign Secretary reiterated Pakistan's unwavering commitment to fostering a peaceful neighbourhood grounded in principles of mutual respect, sovereign equality, and undiminished security for all states. He also expressed the importance of an international instrument on Negative Security Assurances, addressing military implications and artificial intelligence, and pursuing balanced reductions in armed

forces and conventional armaments. She said that Pakistan strongly condemns Thursday's massacre by Israel's occupation forces of unarmed Palestinians, who were awaiting life-saving aid and food delivery in Gaza. This massacre demonstrates a blatant disregard for civility and international humanitarian law and Israel's deliberate and inhumane policy of mass starvation, she said. Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said that Pakistan reiterates its call for an immediate and urgent ceasefire, lifting of the inhumane siege and unimpeded access of humanitarian aid to the people of Gaza. Israel must also face justice for its crimes against humanity being perpetrated with impunity against the Palestinian people, she said. SABAH

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Time to govern well

RAASHID WALI JANJUA

Now that the electoral battles have been lost and won, the challenge to govern well begins. A not-so-elegant variation of James Carville's timeless aphorism 'It's economy, stupid' sounds 'It's governance, stupid' in Pakistan's context. Too much focus on politics and its myriad variations detracts from the fundamental fact that no amount of politics would yield dividends unless the governance issue is fixed.

What Pakistan has at present is a tanking economy, a burgeoning population, a polarized polity, and an angry cohort of 58.7 million out of which 21.8 million fall in the category of NEET – not enrolled in school, training or any employment – according to the Labour Force Survey 2021. The angry, frustrated and jobless cohort of the young population is rooting for reforms that change their daily lives, which are presently mired in hopelessness. Is there something for this social media-influenced angry segment of the population in the electoral manifestoes of the mainstream political parties?

The sad reality is that all those manifestoes – being long on promises but short on implementable programmes – bring more misery to people. The silver bullet to lessen public suffering is governance. Governance is about rule of law and implementation of all those ideas that are highlighted while in opposition but tossed out when in government by all political parties. Pakistan needs fundamental reforms and structural changes in its political and economic governance model. Tinkering at the margins for ephemeral changes and social media catharsis through placebo solutions will fuel further public anger.

Pakistan needs a new politico-economic variant of social contract and a dismantling of the present architecture of the political economy that primarily caters to the elite's needs. All future economic initiatives of the newly appointed governments are likely to fail if the present extractive structure of the political economy is not changed. The time has come to say goodbye to the culture of patronage and embrace people-friendly economics.

To achieve this, the new government will have to bring the untaxed segments of the economy into the tax net, remove subsidies to influential lobbies, and withdraw exemptions to holy cows like real estate, agriculture, and the services sector.

The trader lobby will pressurize the PML-N while the agriculture lobby will urge the PPP to come to their rescue, but the tax net needs to be expanded if this country is to survive. Similarly, import substitution lobbies benefiting from government patronage may pose a challenge for authorities when it comes to altering the structure of the economy to prefer exported industrial productivity over consumption-focused import substitution policies.

A million-dollar question is: who's going to do it? Can the new patchwork coalition deliver in a scenario where structural changes – which not only alter the political economy but also social structure – are essential for a meaningful change?

The answer to these questions lies in fiscal discipline, industrial productivity, and social mobilization. The indicators of the above change will be the conduct of the new government at both the federal and provincial levels. Governance is nothing but the conduct of the government as per rule of law for the welfare of the people.

People have no more tolerance for hollow promises. The burden of past unfulfilled promises of providing millions of homes and jobs also hangs around their necks. It is an explosive situation where the volcanic eruption of public discontent can only be kept in check through a display of altruism, frugality and good governance by the new government.

But are our politicians across the political divide up to these heavy expectations? The answer might lie in the conduct of the new assemblies and the quality of the cabinet thrown up by them. People would be reassured if the new government starts with the positives that soothe their frayed nerves. These positives include a lean cabinet both at the federal and provincial levels with merit being the sole criterion in the allocation of cabinet slots.

The new assembly members should not give themselves generous pay raises in deference to the straitened economic circumstances of the country throughout the tenure of the present assemblies. This act alone will push their electorate under the weight of heavy inflation (29 per cent average in 2023) and joblessness (6.3 per cent as per the Pakistan Labour Force Survey 2021).

The most visible signs of colonial grandeur like long convoys and heavy protocols should be banned by the new prime minister and respective chief ministers. This will need some courage, but it is an idea whose time has come and could win the new beleaguered government much-needed public goodwill.

While appointing ministers, it should be ensured that technical ministries like energy, finance, industries, etc have at least one technocrat. Technical experts should be appointed in leadership positions of semi-government and state-owned independent corporations. Development funds should not be given to MNAs and MPAs and be spent on merit through established institutional channels. No new institutions should be created, and the existing ministries and institutions should be empowered, resourced, monitored, and then held accountable. All institutions should be incentivized to work within the assigned constitutional space without encroaching upon others' domains. Reforms in the judiciary to ensure speedy justice at affordable costs should be ensured while introducing policies that extend the reach of the judiciary to the former Fata region. This may seem a tall order, but a new beginning to govern well is an inescapable necessity. If politicians do not govern well, an increasingly aware and angry young population will throw them out in no time.

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Dr Ayesha Razzaque

The AI frontier at WGS

fossil fuels to steam and later to electrons moving through copper wires ('electricity'). The computer /internet revolution was powered by the invention of the microprocessor CPU which accelerated the transmission and processing of information. Now, the AI revolution, powered by the GPU which has accelerated computations by a factor of a million, is transforming data into intelligence that can be nearly instantly transmitted across the globe. Other countries will not produce foundation models for the world's many countries, societies, and languages. Many countries now have data protection laws that make it difficult to impossible for national data to cross national borders which makes it hard for one country to develop comprehensive AI models for communities other than their own. That is why countries and communities need to become active participants in developing their own AI models. So, what will that take? Huang's session at the WGS was also enlightening because he broke it down in quantitative terms. The most elementary prerequisite for building artificial intelligence is the conversion of non-electronic literature, knowledge, and data to, and the collection of, electronic data. This will require building out the internet and traditional data centers. Huang estimated the current install base of data centers at around \$1 trillion and that this will grow to about \$2 trillion in the next few years. When I heard that figure, my immediate thought was, 'What slice of that spending can a country like ours afford?' These new data centers will have to be built specifically to support AI workloads – which means they will have a lot more GPUs than previous ones. NVIDIA's current generation top-of-the-line GPU for data centers is the H100 and a single one is priced at around \$30,000. Its next-generation GPU, the H200, is expected to be priced between \$25,000 and \$40,000, the range of a family sedan in Pakistan. Facebook is using batches of 16,000 GPUs or more to train a single iteration of a Generative AI (GenAI) model which takes about one month. The ballpark figure for only one such data center is around \$1 billion today. That is more than many IMF tranches Pakistan received in recent years and have kept it borderline solvent. Data centres for AI workloads are also much more power-hungry and require two to three times the power of existing data centers. How many such data centres will we be able to afford? They say freedom is not free, and nei-

ther is the democratization of AI. Not being left out of the next technical revolution will require investments that are massive by our GDP's standard. For decades, the mantra in education has been that all children need to become at least computer /internet literate and know the basics of programming computers. Huang explained that the current generation of GenAI models will do away with the need to know programming to get serious work done on a computer, replace it with a natural language interface, and reset the technological edge workforces of some countries had over others. A large part of the world's population is less than fluent in English. This makes it vital to develop natural language interfaces for GenAI models in languages other than English. In Pakistan, that means Urdu, Punjabi, Pashto, Sindhi, Saraiki, Balochi and others. Day 2 of the summit prominently featured Dr Yann LeCun, Meta's (formerly Facebook) vice-president and chief AI scientist and winner of the ACM Turing Award (the most prestigious prize in computer science) along with Geoffrey Hinton and Yoshua Bengio, known together as 'The three godfathers of AI'. In the recently resurrected debate about AI taking over the world, LeCun was on the side that holds the view such fears are overblown and takes an optimistic view of the future development of AI systems. LeCun is also known for his strong stance in favour of keeping AI systems that will be part of the public infrastructure of the future open source. 'Open source' means the code an application is written is published and available for inspection, modification, and improvement. Open-source projects benefit from more eyeballs, and more scrutiny, making them safer. AI systems are likely to become a widely used repository of human knowledge. LeCun argued that these systems must be diverse and free, just like the press, so opinions do not come from a single source. For this reason, LeCun did include a warning in his session: While it will be necessary to develop guardrails and safety systems for AI systems, do not legislate open-source AI systems out of existence. Speakers on Day 2 also included Sam Altman, CEO of OpenAI, the company that gave the world the DALL-E text-to-image generator, ChatGPT, and, just this week, a first taste of Sora, a text-to-video GenAI model. He shared LeCun's optimistic forecast of a future with GenAI tools. Although it is always hard to foretell,

Altman sees the most powerful use cases coming from education where large language models (like ChatGPT) can provide tailored instructions, healthcare, and government services for tasks as mundane as filling out forms. More broadly, Altman was of the view that for the betterment of individual lives, to improve productivity and creativity, and to discover new 'killer' applications, these and future tools need to be put in the hands of everyone. A significant chunk of his session was dedicated to the issue of regulations on which Altman's view was that we ought to give this new technology space for experimentation in regulatory sandboxes before imposing regulations. The ideas discussed at the summit were ahead of what I usually catch in local policy circles and left me walking away with many questions: Wikipedia's 'List of Pakistanis by net worth' tops out in the low single-digit billion USD range. Who in this country can afford to invest in a single data centre equipped with the resources fit to train a single GenAI model in our local language(s) (and host it)? I do not see the government capable of it and I cannot see why a big-tech company would invest in such a magnitude because I cannot see them make their money back. LeCun said that the current generation of GenAI models is being trained on "all the public data" available on the internet and yet, the models so produced are still not perfect. Do we even have enough data to train large language models in our local languages? The amount of published content in, electronic and non-electronic forms, of our local languages must pale in comparison to what is available in English. Without the infrastructure and requisite data, our technology sector will likely be confined to fine-tuning existing foundation models (in English) which will have limited impact in a country where most of the population lacks the level of command over English to adequately express themselves to make a GenAI model do their bidding. A few weeks ago, just before the elections, the PTI produced an audio address of Imran Khan delivering key messages to voters probably using key talking points and voice samples from past media appearances as input, and it seemed everyone temporarily lost their minds.

The writer (she/her) has a PhD in Education.

Disclaimer: Views expressed by writers in this section are their own and do not necessarily reflect The Asian Telegraph's point-of-view

Today in History

History of Pakistan



URDU: THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE OF PAKISTAN

preserve its separate identity in the subcontinent.

ever assumed seriousness during the decline of Muslim power in South Asia. The first person to realize its acuteness was the scholar theologian, Shah Waliullah (1703-62). He laid the foundation of Islamic renaissance in

the subcontinent and became a source of inspiration for almost all the subsequent social and religious reform movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

To be continued....

Apart from religion, Urdu also enabled the Muslim community during the period of its ascendancy to

MUSLIM IDENTITY

The question of Muslim identity, how-

Showbiz

Dwayne Johnson buys ownership to multiple phrases as copyrights

The Rock aka Dwayne Johnson adds more than a dozen phrases to ownership



Dwayne Johnson seems to be wanting to be called by more names other than "The Rock." In fact, Johnson is now the official owner of the nickname "The most electrifying man in sports and entertainment." The actor and former wrestler, whose fame skyrocketed as a WWE star about 20 years ago, has bought the rights to multiple nicknames, insults and catchphrases that he was called with in his ring era in the 90s and early 2000s. The owned phrases include "Candy A's," "Jabroni," and "If you smell what The Rock is cooking." Johnson's ownership of the intellectual-property rights to the names and phrases comes after he made a deal to

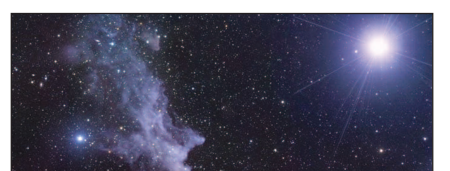
become a part of the board of directors of TKO Group Holdings, which is a company named Endeavor, that also merged WWE and the UFC. Johnson got the ownership rights to his famous ring name 1, "The Rock," last month in a 10-K filing Feb. 27. TKO additionally revealed two dozen names and taglines that are also owned by Johnson now. All the newly owned phrases include: "The Rock," "Rocky Maivia," "Team Corporate," "Rock Nation," "The Nation," "Roody Poo," "Candy Ass," "Jabroni," "If you smell what The Rock is cooking," "The Samoan Sensation," "The Blue Chipper," "The Brahma Bull," "The People's Cham-

pion," "The Great One," "Know Your Role and Shut Your Mouth," "Team Bring It," "The Rock Just Bring It," "The People's Elbow," "Rock Bottom," "Finally, The Rock has come back to...," "It doesn't matter what...," "Blue Hell," "The millions... (and millions)," "Rockpocalypse," "Project Rock" and "The most electrifying man in sports and entertainment." As part of the TKO agreement, Johnson also has control over related logos and service marks as well as "all other nicknames, caricatures, voice, signature, gestures, routines, costumes or parts of costumes, accessories [and] crowns" that are in anyway related to his time as a WWE wrestler.

Tech

Earliest starlight of universe discovered by Nasa's JWST in cosmic fog

The James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) has looked back in time to help explain the reionisation phase, which is one of the greatest mysteries in the cosmos. After a protracted era known as the cosmic dark ages, this phase in the cosmic timeline is believed to have been initiated by the birth of the first stars and galaxies, according to Interesting Engineering. The question of how the early cosmos broke out of the cosmic dark ages has been a subject of scientific inquiry. With the most precise data ever on this cosmic dawn, the powerful space telescope has shed light on the first billion years of the universe. The results imply that the reionisation of the early universe was probably initiated by the young galaxies. "They were incredibly energetic stars in many, many tiny little galaxies," said Joel Leja, assistant professor of astronomy and astrophysics at Penn State and author of the paper. "These sources worked like cosmic light-houses that burned off the fog of neutral hydrogen. Whatever this was, it was so ener-



getic and so persistent, that the entire universe became re-ionised," explained Leja. The first thorough spectrum data on the oldest starlights in the universe were gathered by the Webb telescope. Especially, the photos provide a previously unattainable view of minuscule, recently created galaxies that were born less than a billion years after the Big Bang. A pivotal point in the cosmic chronology is the reionisation epoch. The universe was formerly dark and covered in a thick, impenetrable layer of primordial gas. There were no light sources in the early universe during the cosmic dark ages. Things started to slowly change as the first stars came on.

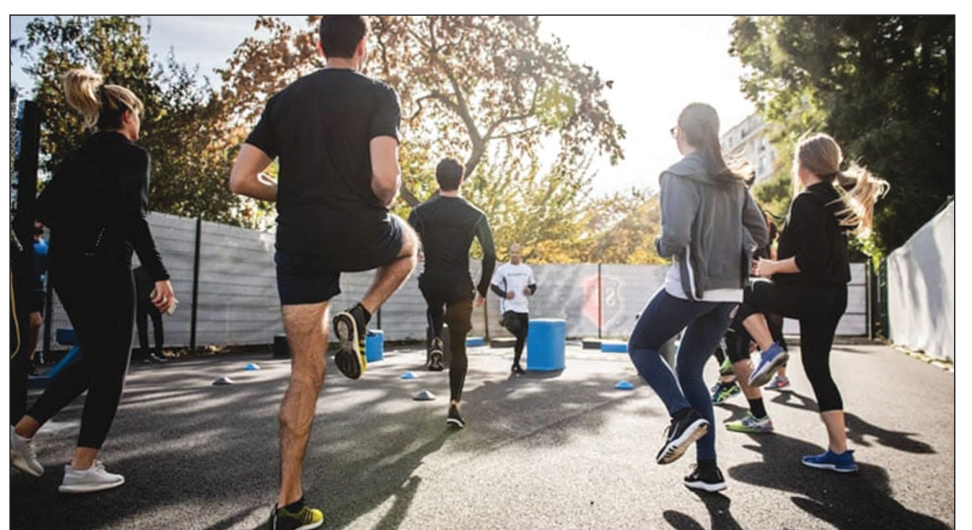
Experts suggest 10 most effective exercises for your thighs

Having strong legs allows us to continue to perform daily activities with ease

The muscles that extend knees and support knee joints are called quadriceps, which are located at the front of our legs, halfway between our hips and knees. Women's Health reported. Having strong legs allows us to continue to perform daily activities such as walking, and climbing with ease and helps us live independently throughout our life. What are some benefits of quad exercises? Boost leg power. Bolster knee and leg stability. Boost the composition of our body. Allows diversity in training. Here are 5 exercises that you can do to train

your quads: Squat
 This classic lower-body workout works all of your major leg muscles, including the quadriceps, and stimulates a variety of common actions.
Step-Up
 Whether you're hiking or hauling it up a flight of stairs, this functional exercise builds the quad strength you need to tackle all sorts of daily activities.
Reverse Lunge
 This beginner-friendly lunge builds single-leg strength for a balanced lower body.
Walking Lunge

Walking lunges challenge your quad endurance and power as you travel forward while also improving your range of motion, balance, and posture by loosening up your hips and hamstrings.
Bear Crawl
 This bodyweight floor exercise hits your quads, core, and shoulders. Speed it up, and you'll get some cardio perks, too. Wondering what is the best exercise for quads? Fitness trainer Kristina Earnest said that the "back squat is without a doubt the most effective exercise you can do for building quad strength, power, and size".



Health

Shehbaz Sharif felicitates Ayaz Sadiq

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister-Designate Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday congratulated Sardar Ayaz Sadiq for winning the election of Speaker National Assembly with a thumping majority. In a statement, Shehbaz Sharif who is the President Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N), said that Ayaz Sadiq has set a unique example of victory as Speaker NA for the third time, adding that he is an experienced and senior politician. He said that Sardar Ayaz Sadiq will play an active role in promotion of democratic values in the country. APP

Punjab govt to establish digital database for comprehensive population records

LAHORE: Under the leadership of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, the provincial government has taken a historic step by deciding to create a digital record of every neighborhood and population in Punjab for the first time.

This initiative, known as the Punjab Digital Database, aims to compile an accurate count of the entire population, including details such as number, location, contact information, and addresses of vulnerable segments. Headed by Mariyum Aurangzeb, a 13-member technical working group was constituted in a meeting chaired by the Punjab chief minister. The group includes Bilal Azhar Kiyani, a member of the party's central economic team and member of the National Assembly, along with senior officials and statisticians. The Punjab Digital Data Bank will serve as the foundation for planning education, health, and development initiatives across the province, ensuring equitable resource distribution among all residents. It will also establish a transparent system for monitoring progress on development projects and delivering financial assistance to beneficiaries directly.

The availability of accurate data and information will facilitate economic policies and informed decision-making. The data bank will also support the social security of the elderly, widows, orphans, needy families, and students.

Moreover, the digital system will automatically register newborns in Punjab and collect information on individuals who have settled in Punjab from other regions. This population data collection will aid in formulating both short-term and long-term policies. In a meeting chaired by Chief Minister Punjab, the progress of the Punjab Socio-Economic Registry Project was also reviewed. Senior party leaders Pervaiz Rasheed, Maryam Aurangzeb, Azma Bukhari, Sania Ashiq, and social welfare expert Dr. Anjad Saqib participated in the meeting. The meeting was attended by Chief Secretary Punjab, Chairman P&D, various Provincial Secretaries, Chairman PITB, CEOs PSPA, Urban Unit, and other officials. INP



ISLAMABAD: TO Takeshi, Charge d Affaires Embassy of Japan in Pakistan, together with Neveen Syed, Director Sogetsu Ikebana Study Group, viewing Japanese Ikebana exhibition titled "Mughal Architecture Through the eyes of Sogetsu Ikebana". INP

SAPM inaugurates protectorate of emigrants office in capital

VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, Jawad Sohrah Malik on Friday inaugurated the first-ever Protectorate of Emigrants Office in the capital city that signifies the country's commitment in promoting safe and legal migration. This groundbreaking initiative not only underscores the government's dedication in ensuring the welfare of its citizens seeking employment abroad but also positions Islamabad as a focal point for international collaboration on labor and migration issues, said a press release. The inauguration of the Islamabad Protectorate Office, closely following the recent opening of two protectorate offices in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), in Bagh and Rawalakot, further amplifies the government's efforts in streamlining migration services across the country. These steps are reflective of the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development's ongoing mission to facilitate the journey of Pakistani workers abroad, ensuring their rights and well-being are prioritized at every stage. During the ceremony, the SAPM highlighted the strategic importance of establishing the Protectorate in Islamabad, a city that hosts numerous international organizations, including labor and migration entities as well as foreign embassies. "The inauguration of the Islamabad Protectorate Office is not just a mile-



stone for our capital but a testament to Pakistan's resolve in championing the causes of safe and legal migration globally," remarked Malik. "This office will serve as the model protectorate, showcasing our commitment to excellence and our readiness to collaborate with international partners in upholding global migration standards." The Islamabad Protectorate Office is set to become a model for migration services, offering comprehensive support to individuals seeking overseas employment opportunities. It aims to serve as a beacon of hope and assurance for the

Pakistani workforce, facilitating their access to legitimate employment avenues and safeguarding their rights across borders. This initiative is part of a larger government strategy to boost employment opportunities for Pakistanis both at home and abroad, contributing significantly to the national economy through remittances. The SAPM's unwavering dedication in enhancing the migration experience for Pakistani workers is evident in the establishment of these offices, which promise to make a significant impact on the lives of many.

PPP's Sarfraz Bugti elected 'unopposed' as Balochistan chief minister



QUETTA: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) candidate Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has been elected as Balochistan chief minister (CM) unopposed as no other contestant had submitted nomination papers besides him. Sarfraz Bugti, who served as former caretaker interior minister, submitted four nomination papers for Balochistan's chief minister's slot to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) office. The election for the Balochistan chief minister position was scheduled for tomorrow (Saturday). He has been elected unopposed as no other lawmaker has submitted nominations paper for the slot. PPP and PML-N had jointly nominated Sarfraz Bugti as their candidate for the top slot of the leader of the house in line with the formula decided to form government at federal level and coalition government in Balochistan. The politician had resigned as the caretaker interior minister in December last year and joined the Bilawal Bhutto-led party. INP

Pakistan envoy presents credentials

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Pakistan Saima Maymunah Sayed on Friday presented her diplomatic credentials to President of Cabo Verde Jose Maria Neves at the Palais Præsidentiel at Mindelo. During the meeting, they discussed trade engagement, pending agreements and training for the diplomats of Cabo Verde, according to the embassy's press release. During her visit to the city, the ambassador also held a meeting at the Northern Chamber of Commerce in Mindelo. The meetings featured the discussion on strengthening the linkages made after the Cabo Verde delegates attended the 2nd Pakistan Africa Trade Development Conference in 2021. Meanwhile, Ambassador of Pakistan in Tunisia Javed Umrani met Director General of the International Diplomatic Academy of Tunisia Fayçal Gouia. DNA

Asif Zardari constitutes committee to oversee party's affairs in Punjab

ISLAMABAD: President of Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians (PPPP), Asif Ali Zardari, Friday formed a committee to oversee party affairs in the Punjab Province. The committee comprises two members, Nadeem Afzal Chan and Syed Ali Qasim Gillani, said a press release issued by Rukhsana Bangash, Political Secretary to the President of PPPP. APP

Election Commission of Pakistan issues schedule & notice for Presidential election going to be held on 9th March



ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has issued a

notice for the Presidential election, which will be held on 9th of this month. The schedule has been issued by the order of the Chief Election Commissioner of Pakistan.

"In pursuance of the provisions contained in paragraphs 1 and 3 of the Second Schedule of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, 1973 read with clauses (3) and (4) of Article 41 of the Constitution, Public Notification for election to the office of the President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan is hereby issued and in relation thereto the following programme for receipt

of nomination papers, scrutiny of nomination papers, withdrawal of candidature, publication of list of validly nominated candidates, retirement and the polling day," read the notification issued by ECP on Friday.

According to the ECP, the candidates for the country's top constitutional office can submit nomination papers by March 2 before 12:00 PM with the presiding officers in Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar and Quetta.

The scrutiny for the nomination papers by the returning officers will be held on March 4, the notification said, adding that the candidature can be withdrawn the next day. Afterwards, the commission will publish the list of validly nominated candidates the same day and March 6 has been fixed as the date for retirement. The polling for the next president will be held on March 9 at the National Assembly and all the provincial assemblies from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM. SABAH

Islamabad deputy commissioner jailed for contempt of court

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) has declared Islamabad Deputy Commissioner Irfan Nawaz Memon as guilty of contempt of court and awarded him six-month imprisonment and Rs100,000 fine.

Pronouncing its verdict on Friday, the court also found Islamabad police's SSP Operations Jamil Zafar also guilty and sent him to prison for four months and slapped with a fine of Rs100,000.

A single bench of IHC comprising Justice Babar Sattar also awarded two-month prison sentence and Rs100,000 fine to SHO Nasir Manzoor. IHC's Justice Sabar Sattar, however, suspended the jail sentence of the deputy commissioner, saying he is being given a chance to file an appeal against the court verdict. "The deputy commissioner will be arrested if his sentence was not suspended by filing an appeal in 30 days," the judge remarked.

In reaction, Islamabad police officers will challenge the IHC verdict, arguing that they and the deputy commissioner used their powers as per law to maintain law and order. They said that all are equal before the law and they will take next step in accordance with the law. The police officers will continue to work until final decision of the court.

On the last hearing, the court had reserved the verdict in the contempt of court case, saying it will be announced on Friday, directing the accused to be present on that day, dismissing the plea for exemption from appearance. INP

As PM, Sharif will find the country facing many threats

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain, said on Friday that as Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, he will have to govern a country facing many serious problems. He said that bringing political and economic stability to a country divided by politics and facing an economic crunch would be a big challenge for him. Mian Zahid Hussain said that Shehbaz Sharif had saved the country from bankruptcy by signing a standby agreement with the IMF, and now he will try hard to get a positive response from the IMF in its last review and enter a new agreement to improve things. Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that the old agreement with the IMF was to save the country from bankruptcy, due to which the foreign exchange reserves and the deficit remained more or less within the recommended limits

of the IMF. The new long-term deal with the IMF will include addressing the issues that have pushed the country to the brink of bankruptcy. Addressing these problems in the economy will be a challenge for Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif because the country's sluggish economy and weak control of the government are in the interest of many influential groups. These groups have been squeezing the economy and the people for decades, and they will resist every move to streamline things, he added. The business leader said that in the event of another agreement with the IMF, the lender would not allow the deficit to exceed 1.5 percent of GDP, which means the government would not be able to undertake major infrastructure projects and go for heavy spending, which will cause frustration among the public and newly elected members of parliament. Mian Zahid Hussain said that in these circumstances it will be difficult to get help from China and Arab countries. Still, there are bright possibilities of huge invest-

ment in the country under SIFC, due to which people will get employment.

Investments will make it possible to keep the value of the rupee stable and inflation under control, he said, adding that the business community is hopeful that the incoming government will privatise the sick companies, the problems of electricity and gas will be solved, and the cost of doing business will be reduced. Moreover, efforts will be made to increase exports and boost the tax-to-GDP ratio to improve the overall situation. PPP and MQM will fully support the government in these measures, and the business community also hopes that the opposition will not take such irresponsible steps that make life miserable for the common man. Mian Zahid Hussain further said that at present, the people and business community across the country are protesting due to electricity and gas bills and oil prices, and the incoming government can do a lot in this regard by reducing electricity, gas theft, capacity charges, and line losses. DNA

KSA gifts 100 tons dates to Pakistan as goodwill gesture

ISLAMABAD: The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as a goodwill gesture has gifted 100 tons of dates to its Pakistani brethren.

Following the recommendation of leadership of Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, the Saudi government has extended a heartfelt gift to the people of Pakistan continuing its annual tradition during a ceremony held here at the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia.

Ambassador Nawaf Bin Said Al-Malki, along with Abdullah Al-Baqami, Director of the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre (Ksrelief), handed over the consignment to the government of Pakistan.

This generous donation was intended for distribution among the Pakistani community during the holy month of Ramadan.

This noble gesture exemplifies the enduring bond of friendship and brotherhood between the two nations, reflecting the spirit of generosity and solidarity cherished by both Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. INP

Saudi Ambassador commends ASP Naqvi, offers royal visit in appreciation

ISLAMABAD: Saudi Ambassador to Pakistan Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki will arrange a Royal Visit invitation to ASP Syeda Shehbarano Naqvi and her family, in recognition of her heroic intervention to save a woman from a violent mob in Lahore's Achhra Market.

According to a source close to the Saudi Ambassador, Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki, Saudi Arabia's Ambassador to Pakistan, extended the invitation to ASP Syeda Shehbarano during their meeting at the Saudi embassy, where he commended her bravery.

The Saudi Ambassador to Pakistan praised the bravery of the police officer and assured her that the Saudi government would cover the expenses of her and her family's trip to Saudi Arabia as honored guests.

The Saudi ambassador lauded ASP Naqvi for her selfless devotion to duty and professionalism in diffusing a volatile situation.

Earlier, the Assistant Superintendent of Police from Gulberg, Lahore visited General Headquarters to meet with Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir.



General Munir recognized the significant contributions of Pakistani women across various spheres of life.

He stated, "Since independence, Pakistani women have showcased their talent, perseverance, and dedication, both domestically and internationally."

The inspector general of police (IGP) has recommended Syeda Shehbarano Naqvi for the Quaid-i-Azam Police Medal (QPM). APP



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah meets American Ambassador Donald Blome at CM House. APP

36pc new faces reach National Assembly in general polls

ISLAMABAD: After this year's general elections, a record 36 percent of new faces have made their entry in the National Assembly.

Out of 265 legislators, there are now 96 new faces who have reached the assembly. The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has the highest number of new faces elected in the general elections as Independents.

Among the new faces, 15 members of PML-N, 11 members of PPP and MQM have become MNAs for the first time. Abdul Aleem Khan and Awn Chaudhry from IPP have been elected for the first time to become a part of the National

Assembly. Ataullah Tarar of PML-N, Mir Jamal Khan Raisani, the youngest member of Pakistan Peoples Party, has also been elected from Balochistan for the first time and reached the lower house.

Among the new faces are PTI-backed Barrister Gohar Ali Khan, Sher Afzal Marwat and Latif Khosa. Shandana Gulzar was a member on reserved seats in the last assembly but this time she has been elected on the general seat. MQM's Rauf Siddiqui, Syed Mustafa Kamal, Arshad Vohra have also been elected members of the National Assembly for the first time. INP